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POSITION OF THE JAINAS IN BENGAL DURING THE RULE OF GOPĀLA, THE FIRST PĀLA KING

Chitta Ranjan Pal

The non-existence of any inscriptional as well as literary evidence pertaining to the existence of the Nirgranthas (Jainas) in Bengal, during the Pāla rule, had once led Jinologists of India and abroad, to believe that the efflorescence of Buddhism, consequent upon the enthronement of the Pāla dynasty in Bengal was the main cause of the sudden eclipse of the Nirgranthas (Jainas) from the Kingdom.¹ But this supposition is not based upon unimpeachable evidence or ground.

It is true that the persecution of the Nirgranthas (Jainas) by King Śaśāṅka of Karṇasuvarṇa and the maltreatment which they endured during the evil days of “Mātsyanyāya” or the great anarchy of Bengal, probably forced many Nirgranthas (Jainas) to migrate to the fastnesses of the forests and hilly tracts of western part of Bengal or outside. In fact, the Nirgranthas (Jainas) were in the habit of leaving uncongenial places and migrating to favourable habitations for the performance of their religious practices without let or hindrance, since the days of Bhadravāhu, their last *śrutakevalin*.²

Stories of the Persecutions of the heretical sects by the Brahmanical religious zealots (*tīrthikas*) have been found recorded in Hieu-en-Tsang’s “*si-yu-ki*” and the Buddhist chronicle “*Ārya-mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa*”. In spite of probable exaggerations, the allegations of persecutions, seem not to be quite baseless³. In fact some sort of

1. R.C. Majumder, Jainism in Ancient Bengal (Jain Journal, Vol xviii. No.4)
2. Mrs. Stevenson, Heart of Jainism
3. Quoted from K. P. Jayswal’s translation of AMMK.

oppressions had been endured by the heretics like the Buddhists and the Nirgranthas (Jainas) during the reign of Śaśāṅka and during the evil days of “Mātsyanyāya” or the great anarchy in Bengal.

But the scenerio changed with the establishment of the Pāla dynasty in Bengal by Gopāla who was chosen by the Prakriti or subjects (people) to put an end to the anarchy in Bengal.

Gopāla was brave, considerate, sweet toungeed as well as rational in outlook. He patronised all religions whether Brahmanical or non-Brahmanical.

Lāmā Tāranātha, in his “History of Buddhism in India” stated that Gopāla propitiated Devī-Chuṁḍa, a Buddhist Goddess and received an Āyudha (a wooden club) from her. Tāranātha further related that god Khasarpaṇa prophesied that Gopāla would find a Kingdom in the East. Inspired by the prophecy of god Khasarpaṇa and armed with the wooden club (Āyudha) he proceeded from Puṇḍravardhana to Bhaṅgala (East Bengal) where anarchy was reigning superme. Putting an end to the prevailing anarchy in Bhaṅgala, he sat upon the throne of the Kingdom with the acquiescence of the subjects.⁴

From the same “History” we also come to know that Gopāla during the first term of his reign ruled over Bhaṅgala and in the later part of his rule he conquered Magadha. But almost all modern historians of Bengal are of opinion that in between the conquests of Bhaṅgala and Magadha, Gopāla must have subdued the chieftains of other divisions of ancient Bengal Viz. Gauḍa, Puṇḍra, Rāḍha etc.⁵ In these kingdoms “Gopala established many monasteries and thus extensively served the ‘law’”.

Lāmā Tāranātha is unequivocal in stating that Gopala was a Buddhist before his accession to the throne and throughout his life he had served the cause of the religion of the Buddha.⁶

4. Tāranātha’s History of Buddhism in India ed. D.P. Chattopadhyaya.

5. R. C. Majumder, History of Ancient Bengal.

6. Tāranātha’s, “History of Buddhism in India” ed. D. P. Chattopadhyaya.

But the Buddhist chronicle, “*Ārya Mañjuśrīmūla-kalpa*”, on the other hand, states that Gopala was not a Buddhist at all in his early life. At that time he was led astray by some wicked women. But coming in contact with a good religious friend he became very charitable and constructed “Vihāras, Chaityas, Gardens, reserviors, beautiful free hotels, bridges, Devatemple and caves”. He was a lover of justice too.⁷

According to *Ārya Mañjuśrī-mūla-kalpa*, Gopāla patronised both the Buddhist and Brahmanical religions, but his leanings towards the Tirthikas were more pronounced.⁸ In fact, Gopāla was catholic in religious disposition. Gopala’s patronage to Brahmanical religion probably was irksome to the Buddhist chronicler. So he made complaints of Gopāla’s bias for the Tīrthikas. However, it is to be noted that Gopāla was liked by his subjects whether Brahmanical or non-Brahmanical for his generosity and liberality as well as tolerance. So, in a short span of time he could bring to his new kingdom peace and prosperity by eradicating the virus of anachy and lawlessness. The advent of Gopala to the political horizon of Bhaṅgala, Puṇḍravardhana, Gauḍa, Rāḍha and Magadha brought new hopes and aspirations to those religious sects who were alleged to have been oppressed during the evil days of *mātsyanyāya* and earlier still during years of Śasāṅka’s reign.

In fact, Gopāla’s coming to power not only did bring about a political change in ancient Bengal and Magadha, but also did usher in a new age of vitality and catholicity to the socio-religious life in these regions. Buddhism, patronized by the new king emerged in Bengal as a strong religious force in its manifold aspects. Brahmanical religion, too, took advantage of the generocity of the new king and spread its tentacles to different regions of Bengal.⁹

7. K. P. Jayswal, Imperial History of India .

8. *Ibid*

9. N. R. Roy, Bangalir Itihasa, (Ādiparva)

The moriband Nirgranthas (Jainas) who had kept themselves stuck to their old habitations bearing all sorts of privations, were invigorated with a new life after a long hibernation since the days of Śaśāṅka. The news of vernal religious freedom generated by generous Gopāladeva might have induced some of the migrant Nirgranthas (Jainas) to return to their older habitats. So it seems that the spectacle of sky-clad monks performing various sorts of austere religious practices, probably, became a regular feature which greeted the eyes of people of Samatāṭa, Puṇḍravardhana and other regions where the Nirgranthas (Jainas) were “very numerous” once.¹⁰

That the Nirgranthas (Jainas) formed a part of the *religieux* of ancient Bengal during the reign of Gopāla can be gleaned from a śloka (No. 687) of *Ārya Mañjuśrī-mūla-kalpa* which is quoted below :-

“(pāṣaṇḍībhiḥ samākrāntaṁ nānā tīthikavāsībhiḥ /
ākrāntaḥ so diśaḥ sarvā samudratīracaryagāḥ //”

Though the meanings of the two terms *pāṣaṇḍī* and *tīrthika* had undergone changes in later ages, it seems that the Buddhist chronicler like his Brahmanical Hindu contemporaries by the term *pāṣaṇḍas* hinted at the non-Vedic heretical sects with the exclusion of the Buddhists (as the chronicler himself was a Buddhist) and by the term *tīrthikas* the chronicler meant “followers of the different Brahmanical Hindu sects.”

Let us now digress for a moment to find out the original meanings of the two words *pāṣaṇḍa* and *tīrthika* which had undergone changes in later years.

The word *pāsāmdāni* is first found inscribed on Ashokan. Rock Edict XII. The word *pāṣaṇḍa* was then found on the rocks of Hathigumpha at the Udayagiri on Kumari Hills in Kalinga. The inscription was incised on the wall of a cave in Udayagiri during the reign of king Khāravēla in circa 1st century B.C.,¹¹ wherein king

10. Watters, Yuan Chawang Vol II.

Khāravela has been described as *sava pāṣaṇḍa pūjaka* and *sava devāyatana saṁskārakara*. The inscription conveyed the idea that though king Khāravela was a lay devotee of the Śvetāmbara Jain sect, he was eclectic in religious disposition. On one hand he was a *sava pāṣaṇḍa-pūjaka* or a worshipper of the images of all religions” or “respector of every sect” [whether Vedic or non-Vedic] and on the other hand *sava devāyatana saṁskāra-kara* or “a repairer of all the temples of gods”.

It seems that during the pre-Christian and early Christian centuries the word *pāṣaṇḍa* did not acquire any pejorative tinge.

But during the post-Gupta period, the connotation of the word *pāṣaṇḍa* changed and orthodox Brahmanical writers used the word scornfully to hint at the Kṣapaṇakas (Nirgranthas), the Buddhists, the followers of Cārvāka, and other sects who did not conform to Vedic rites and rituals. Such meaning of the term *pāṣaṇḍa* as stated above has been found in some commentaries on the *Manusamhitā*.¹³

The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* most popular among the 18 Purāṇas, was probably finally redacted not before 4th century A.D. and not after 6th century A.D. This Purāṇa stigmatized the followers of Ṛṣabhanātha, the first Tīrthanāka as *pākhandas* but Tīrthanāka Ṛṣabhanātha himself was hailed as one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu, the super-god of the Brahmanical Hindus.¹⁴

In some early and later Purāṇas like the *Matsya-purāṇa* and the *Padma* and *Garuḍa purāṇas* as well as the *Gītāgovinda* of Jayadeva the Gautama Buddha has been eulogized as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, but his followers, the Buddhists have been scoffed at by the Purāṇa-writers as *pāṣaṇḍas*.

11. H. C. Roy Chowdhary, Political History of Ancient India.

12. P. C. Bagchi A comprehensive History of India Part II. P. - 68

13. A. K. Datta, Bharat Varshiya Upasaka Sampradaya, Part II, p.68

14. Sri Krisna Misra, *Prabodhachandrodaya*

In order to eradicate the growing influence of the Buddhists and the Jainas, i.e., the *pāṣaṇḍīs* from the society, the Brahmanical writers of the mediaeval age waged two-pronged attack against the two sects. On the one hand, they indentified the founders of the two *Pāṣaṇḍī* sects (Jainas & Buddhists) as incarnations of Viṣṇu and thus took away fire from the thunder of the *Pāṣaṇḍīs* and on the other hand, strengthened their hate campaign against the two sects to weaken their hold over the society.

The orthodox Brahmanical writers hit the Kāpālikas with the same rod and scronfully called the Kāpālikas *pāṣaṇḍa*. But the Kāpālikas claimed themselves to be the worshippers of Rudra-Śiva, one of the Trinity of the Hindus.¹⁵

In course of time, the word *pāṣaṇḍa* acquired more abusive and derisive meannings like “atheist” “blasphemer”, “irreligious”, “sinner” etc. and during the reign of the Pāla Kings, when Buddhism became a formidable rival of the Brahmanical religion, the Buddhists grew to be the eye-sore to the othodox Brahmins of Bengal. After the fall of the Pāla dynasty, the orthodox Brahmanical sectarians got an appportunity to heap upon the Buddhists all sorts of ignominies and insults and henceforth to the orthodox Brahmanical writers of Bengal the Buddhists and the *pāṣaṇḍas* became synonymous.

In fact, when the term *pāṣaṇḍa* acquired such derisive meanings as atheist, blasphemer, irreligious, sinners etc. in the medieval period, the term *pāṣaṇḍa* was not only used by the orthodox Brahmins against non-Brahmanic sects, but the non-Brahmanical preachers and teachers also hurled it against the orthodox Brahmanical sectarians. Kabir, the celebrated preacher of the “Bhakticult” in some of his *dohās* stigmatized the votaries of different Brahmanical sects as *pākhaṇḍas* (*pāṣaṇḍas*).

Needless to say the followers of ŚreeCīaitanya called the arthodox Brahmanical Hindus Pāṣaṇḍins.

It is also very interesting to note that when the so-collod *pāṣaṇḍas* quarrelled amongst themselves they, too, hurled this abusive word one against another.

15. *Ibid*

In the *Prabodhacandrodaya* (1065 A.D.) of Kriṣṇa Mīśra, Soma siddhanta, a Kāpālika preceptor, (himself a *pāṣaṇḍa*) is found stigmatizing a Nirgrantha Digambara monk (another *pāṣaṇḍa*) as *pāṣaṇḍāpasada*.¹⁶

Like the term *pāṣaṇḍa*, the connotation of Tīrthika had undergone changes in course of time. Originally the word *tīrthika* meant the followers of the teacher of other religious sects than his own. Lāmā Tāranātha by the term *tīrthikas* sometimes meant “outsiders” i.e. not the followers of one’s own sect. Sometimes he is found to include the Lokāyatas or the Cārvākas among the *tīrthikas*.¹⁶ But in most cases by the term *tīrthikas* he meant the Hindus or the followers of different Brahmanical sects. The Buddhist Chronicle, like *Ārya Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* by the term *tīrthika* generally indicated the followers of Brahmanical sects or the Hindus.

After a little digression, let us come to the point of our discussion. K.P. Jayswal, in his *Imperial History of India*, has summarily translated the śloka (687) of *Ārya mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* as follows :-

“The land will become surrounded by many heretics-orthodox Hindus upto the sea”.

The cursory translation of the couplet (No. 687) in English as done by the learned scholar, K.P. Jayswal, who had made “*Pāṣaṇḍībhiḥ*” an adjunct to *nānā* “*Tīrthikabasībhiḥ*” appears not to be very sound.

If K.P. Jayswal’s construction as well as translation is conceded, it is to be concluded that the Buddhist chronicler wanted to convey to his readers the idea that even after several years’ reign of Gopāladeva in Bengal, the whole country had been turned exclusively into abodes of the Tīrthikas or the different Brahmanical sectarians. But the chronicler had no intention to convey to his readers such an idea as

16. A.K. Chatterjee, *A Comprehensive History of Jainism Vol-1*

he himself in the next couplet (688) certified Gopāla as *Dharma-vatsala*” or “devoted to religion i.e. Buddhism”.

In this context, another pertinent question may be raised (if Buddhism was in a decaying state or on the way of extinction) for whom did Gopāla construct so many *vihāras*, *caityas*, *ārāmas* etc. as stated by the Buddhist author himself. That Gopāla constructed several monasteries and temples in Bengal and Magadha have been vouchsafed by the later writer, Lāmā Tāranātha. Lāmā Tāranātha, instead of depicting Gopāla’s reign as an age of decay and extinction of the religion of the Buddha, contrarily had drawn a picture of the dawning of the future resurgence of Buddhism, glowed with the refulgence of the luminaries like Ācārya Jñānagarbha, Ācārya Śākyamati, Ācārya Yaśomitra, and Ācārya Pṛthivībandhu on the eastern horizon of India.¹⁷

It is also to be noted that among the Pāṣaṇḍis in Bengal the Buddhists had grown and become the most popular, most important sect. Next in importance among the Pāṣaṇḍis were the Nirgranthas (Jainas) who were also growing in numbers in Bengal. The Ājivikas probably were non-existent as they were not heard of for a long time. The Kāpālikas seem to be a force not to be seriously reckoned with, the Cārvākas were heard of often but they were never organised into a religious sect.

In this context, a literal translation of the śloka (No. 687) would help in understanding the comparative position of different sects during Gopāla’s reign in Bengal. The literal translation of the couplet (687) as done by the present writer runs as follows :-

“Invested by the Pāṣaṇḍis (heretical sects) on all sides, the land will be infested with different Brahmanical sects, upto the sea-shore.

Before explaining the contents of the Śloka (687), a few words must be expressed regarding the historical value of the book, “Āryamañjaśri-mūlakalpa”.

17. Tāranātha’s History of Buddhism in India, ed. D.P. Chattopadhyaya.

Like the Brahmanical Purāṇas, the book narrates in future tense, the past political events in the form of prophecy and the book is written in corrupt Sanskrit. According to Dr. R.C. Majumdar “The most curious feature of the book is the peculiar way in which it refers to the kings either by the first letter of the name or by a synonym, but never by the full proper name.¹⁸ Though the book is based upon genuine Buddhist tradition, it is not regarded as a genuine historical account by historians. In spite of these draw-backs, historians of repute, had not hesitated to all back upon this much-maligned book to corroborate the evidence, they had gathered from other sources.

In this context, it is also to be pointed out that the emmendation of the corrupt passages as well as rendering of the stupendous book into English was not considered upto the mark by many scohlers.¹⁹ The śloka (687) quoted above itself is not free from mistakes original or copyist and the cursory translation of the couplet by the learned scholar, K.P. Jayswal, is not above criticism.

In the śloka (687) by *Pāṣaṇḍibhiḥ samākrāntam* or Invested by Pāṣaṇḍis, the Buddhist chronicler, meant invaded on all sides by the followers of heretical sects like the Nirgranthas (Jainas) and others like the Ājivikas, Kāpālikas etc. but not the Buddhists as the chronicler himself was a Buddhist. It is also to be remembered that the noted Buddhist writers who chose Sanskrit as their medium failed to create an exclusively Buddhist literary form of expression.²⁰ So they culled imageries and similies from Brahmanical mythology and legends. It is also an irony of history that the Buddhist chroniclers sometimes used a few idioms and vocables which were specifically coined by the Brahmanical writers to denigrate them. Pāṣaṇḍa or Pāṣaṇḍī is one of such vocables.

If we explain the couplet to its context, we must admit that in this śloka (687) the chronicler wanted to tell us that during the reign of Gopāla, the followers of different Brahmanical sects were growing

18. R. C. Majumder, History of Ancient Bengal.

19. *Ibid*

strong on the plains of Bengal and around the habitations of the Brahmanical sectarians, the Pāṣaṇḍis i.e. the Nirgranthas (Jainas) were conspicuous by their presence; while the Buddhists, in spite of royal patronage, were not growing in members as fast as was expected by the chronicler. So in despair, he bewailed that the land upto the Sea-shore had been turned into abodes of the followers of different Brahmanical sects with the lodgements of Nirgranthas on the periphery of their habitats.

From the detailed discussions made above, it is evident that the Nirgranthas (Jainas) formed a part of the religieus of Bengal during the rule of Gopāla, the founder of the Pāla dynasty. They were, of course, a smaller community in comparision either with the Tīrthikas (Brahmanical Hindus) or the Buddhists. But their influence was not negligible in the religious life of Bengal at that time.

In conclusion, it is to be stated that unless, the truth of the presence of the Nirgranthas (Jainas) in Bengal during the reign of Gopāla, is acknowledged, it will be almost impossible to explain the efflorescence of the image-making and temple-building activities of the Nirgranthas (Jainas) of Bengal from the 9th century A.D. onwards, the stray remains and ruins of which had been already unearthed and are being explored in different parts of West Bengal.

A NOTE ON JAINA ICONOGRAPHY

Satya Ranjan Banerjee

Though the Jains do not believe in the existence of Creator-god, they consider their Tīrthaṅkaras as gods and hence fit for worship. So at a later stage, the Jains thought that the images of the Tīrthaṅkaras should be installed in the temples for worship. The Jains further thought that the lives or the important events of the lives of the Tīrthaṅkaras should also be engrossed on stones, bronzes or *paṭṭas* for the future generation who might see and follow the lives of the Tīrthaṅkaras in order to get rid of the cycle of birth, and rebirth. So whether for private or for public worship, the Jains actually needed images. “Lives of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras were probably not intended for biographical treatises, but served a liturgical purpose, for when the images of the Tīrthaṅkaras are worshipped”¹ in private or public temples, they are addressed with hymns manifesting *kalyāṇakas*.

With this idea in the background the Jains started installing the images of Tīrthaṅkaras at different places of India. In course of time, “besides the images of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras, the images of other gods and goddesses, though subordinate in type, play a significant role in Jaina Iconography”². So there came sixty-three *Śalākāpuruṣas* ‘great men’ in the hagiology of the Jains. At a much later time in history the other semigods or class-goddesses also came into existence. There also came into the picture the Yakṣas and Yakṣiṇīs, the Śāsana-devatās, the Dikpāṭas, the Navagrahas, and the Śrutadevatās and Vidyādeva. Gradually, many Brahmanical divinities were silently assimilated into the Jaina pantheon (cf Gaṇeśa, Śrī, Kubera and Indra). As a result, the Jaina Iconography became a subject of interest.

The Jain deities are divided into four classes, viz., Jyotiṣī, Vimānavāsī, Bhavanapati and Vyantara. The Bhavanavāsī devatās

1. D. C. Bhattacharya, *Jain Iconography*, 2nd edn 1974, p. 13.
2. Bhattacharya, *ibid.*, p. 14

may be divided into ten sub-divisions- like the Asuras, Nāgas etc. The Vyantara devatās are of eight kinds - like the Piśācas, Bhūtas, Yakṣas etc. The nine planets, Nakṣatras and the stars belong to the Jyotiṣkas. There are also Vaimānika gods, divided into two *Kalpas* and each with twelve classes. There are also other types of deities like the sixteen Śrūta or *Vidyādevīs* and the *Aṣṭamātrkāś* like Brahmāṇī, Sarasvatī etc., the mothers of the Tīrthaṅkaras like Marudevī etc., *Kṣetrakapāla*, the Bhairavas and the Śrī Devi. “Most of the gods and goddesses, borrowed from the Brahmanical pantheon, are regarded by the Jainas as devoted adherents of the Tīrthaṅkaras”³.

The images of the Tīrthaṅkaras are human in form. There is nothing unusual in their figures. All the images discovered so far are shown in two postures : in *Kāyotsarga* posture, i.e. standing erect, and in *dhyāna-mudrā* posture i. e. seated cross-legged meditation posture. As Jainism believes in severe penance (*tapasyā*), these two *mudrās* are only found.

“The distinguishing features of a Jaina figure are its long-hanging arms, the śrīvatsa symbol, the mild form, youthful body and nudity”⁴. The Jaina images are also described by Varāhamihira in his *Bṛhat-saṁhitā*. According to the *Pratiṣṭhā-sāra-saṁgraha* of Vasunandī, the characteristics of a Jaina Tīrthaṅkara are :-

1. Śrīvatsa (triangular) *Ciṅha* on the chest,
2. The main figure being attended on his right by a Yakṣa and on his left by a Yakṣiṇī,
3. presence of a tree like Aśoka,
- 4-5. a throne-seat, *trilinear* umbrella and a lion-throne,
6. *Prabhā-maṅḍala* or halo round the face of the main figure,
7. a drum,
8. showers of celestial blossoms,

3. Bhattacharya, *ibid*, p. 18.

4. Bhattacharya, *ibid*, p. 19.

9. two *chowries*.
10. heavenly bodies⁵.

All these symbols are seen in a complete image of a Tīrthaṅkara. The Yakṣa, Yakṣiṇī or Śāsana-devatās are to be noticed in the lowest corner of the whole image. They are recognised by the presence of a small image of the Tīrthaṅkaras either at the head or at the top of the Statue. The distinctive symbolic ornaments on Jain figures are *svastikā*, *darpaṇa*, cane-seat, two small fish or flower and a book. The image of a seated Tīrthaṅkara may be easily mistaken for that of the Buddha.

Among the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras, Ṛṣabha, Nemi and Mahāvīra attained *Kaivalya-Jñāna* on a lotus throne, while the other Tīrthaṅkaras demised in the *Kāyotsarga* pose. Most of them are mythical personages, while a few like Ariṣṭanemi, Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra are historical.

For the materials of a Jaina image, it is generally found that it can be made of *maṇi*, *ratna*, gold, silver, brass, *muktāphala* and stone.

The Jain images, made of stone or bronze or octoally, are arranged in a hierarchical order. The chief among them is a *mūlanāyaka*—sometimes Ṛṣabhadeva, sometimes Pārśvanātha, sometimes Supārśva or Mahāvīra, who is surrounded by other Tīrthaṅkaras. Two types of images are generally found—either in a relief depicting one, three or twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras, or the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras aranged clockwise. A combination of three Tīrthaṅkaras (with the chief deity in the centre) is styled ‘trī-Tīrthaṅkara’. The portrayal of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras in a single slab is known as ‘*Caturviṃśatika*’ or ‘*Cauvisi*’ or *Pratimā sarvatobhadrikā*. Besides there are other combinations as well. There may be representations of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras of the past, twenty-four of the future.

5. cf. Bhattacharya, *ibid*, pp. 19-20.

The twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras occupy a central position in the Jain hierarchy, being free from all desires and so the Jains attach much importance to asceticism. As the Tīrthaṅkaras are embodiments of asceticism, they are represented in sculptures as ascetics, draped or naked, in *Paryāṅkāsa* or *Kāyotsarga*. They are distinguished from one another by their attendants — Yakṣas and Yakṣiṇīs as by their cognizances which are carved on the cushion of the throne.

All the Jains excepting Munisuvrata and Nemicandra belonged to the Ikṣvāku family, the other two belonged to the Harivaṁśa.

The images of all the Tīrthaṅkaras are cast into a uniform mould and reveal a stereotyped character. The legends relating to their births, renunciation and salvation are similar, excepting the sixteen dreams of their mothers, *lāñchanas*, Yakṣas etc.

It should be noted that in course of time some Jain writers speculated on the places where the Jain temples would be built up. Vasunandī (1100 A. D.), Jayasena (12th cent. A. D.) and Bhuvanadeva state that Jain Temples are to be built in those places where the Tīrthaṅkaras were born, initiated, enlightened and attained *nirvāṇa*.

The literature on Jain Iconography were also written at a much later time. Of these, Vasunandī's (1100 A.D.) *Pratiṣṭhā-sārasaṁgraha*, Jayasena's (12th cent. A.D.) *Pratiṣṭhā-pāṭha* and Bhuvanadeva's *Aparājita-prcchā* are famous. The *Śrāvākācāra*, *Pratiṣṭhāsāroddhāra*, *Rūpamaṇḍana* are ancillary texts. The *Vivekavilāsa* and the *Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa* are later additions. Āśādhara (1240 A.D.) mentions many other names as authors of Iconographic texts.

If we ransack the pages of history, we can trace the development of Jain Iconographic images from hoary antiquity. On the prehistoric period in the Harappan age some seals and nude male torsos are discovered, and the Jains claim that those belong to Jain Tīrthaṅkaras. As the identification is not clear, scholars are not inclined to accept them as something belonging to Jainism. Another tradition says that Bharata, the son of Ṛṣabhadeva, built Jain temples on the Kailāsa mountain for enshrining the images of Jina in them.

Besides these prehistoric references we also come to know from the Hathigumpha inscriptions (3rd cent. B.C.) that a Nanda king took away an image of a Jina as a Trophy from Kaliṅga to Magadha. Jaina *Āyāgapattas* of the 1st cent. B. C. to the 2nd cent. A. D. were discovered at Mathurā and Kauśāmbī, where the figures of the Tīrthāṅkaras are shown in the centre. Though in the 2nd cent. A.D. in the Junagarh inscription of the grandson of Jayadāman, we have a reference to Jain monks attaining perfect knowledge, we do not have any image of any Jain monks of that time. But several images of the Jain divinities of the Gupta period which are displayed in the Lucknow, Mathura and other Museums, were discovered.

Two inscriptions concerning Jainism of the time of Kumāragupta in the 5th cent. A.D. were discovered. These inscriptions were found at Mathura and Udayagiri. The Mathura inscription (dated 432 A.D.) speaks of a Jain image dedicated by a lady, while the other at Udayagiri in Malva (426 A.D.) describes the image of Pārśvanātha, the 23rd Tīrthāṅkara, erected by an unknown person. Similarly, at the time of Skandagupta (461 A.D.) in the inscription of Kakubha, commonly known as Kahuan inscription, it is stated that five images of the Jain Tīrthāṅkaras are set up in that village.

In the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. the Gaṅga kings of Mysore were very much attached to Jainism. In fact, the founder of the family was a disciple of a Jain teacher called Simhanandin. His successors were also followers of Jainism. It is said that two later rulers of this dynasty, Avinīta and Durvinīta were brought up and nurtured by the two Jain sages Vijayakirti and Pujiyapāda respectively. At their times, the kings presented gifts to Jain monks and built Jain temples. In a similar way, the Kadamba rulers of Vaijayanti, though followers of Hinduism, showed unusual favour towards Jainism. They too gave donations to Jain monks and erected many Jain temples.

In the 7th cent. A.D. in the Vardhana period, an excellent image of Pārśvanātha was enshrined in a Jain temple at Gyarasper near Bhilsa. It is now being displayed in the Victoria and Albert Museum at London.

“The image shows the great master seated beneath the *Dhātakī* tree practising the ‘exposure to all weathers’ austerity when Meghākumāra (Cloud Prince) attacked him with a great storm. The serpent king, the Nāga Dharaṇendra, spreads his hoods above Pārśvanātha’s head and his consort, the Nāginī Padmāvātī, holds an umbrella over him.”⁶

Though Jainism did not flourish very much in the age of Imperial Kanauj (750-1000 A.D.) for the lack of royal support in the north, it, however, received royal support in the south during the period of the Chāpa dynasty in the first quarter of the ninth century. In fact, the Chāpa rulers were the patrons of Jain religion. According to the Jaina Prabandhas, Vanarāja Chavḍā was installed on the throne at Aṇahilapāṭaka by his Jaina *guru* Śī’aguṇasūri. Vanarāja’s prime minister was a Jain merchant named Champā. Another merchant prince Ninnaya by name built a temple of Ṛṣabhanātha at Aṇahilavāḍa. Vanarāja consecrated the idol of Pārśvanātha in the temple of *pañcasāra-caitya* built by him. The rulers of the Chāpa dynasty also built many Jain temples.

From the *Bappabhāṭṭisūricaritra*, found in the *Prabhāvākacaritra* (SJS, pp 85 ff), we come to know that the Pratihāras (from the second quarter of the eighth century to the tenth cent. A.D.) were also the chief patrons of Jain religion. Vatsarāja of this dynasty also consecrated a golden temple of Lord Mahāvīra at Kanauj, and at Gwalior he also installed an image of Mahāvīra.

Without going into details, it is better that we give below in a tabular form the images of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras found in different centuries at different places of India :

S.N.	Tīrthaṅkaras	Period	Century	Names of the places	Museum
1.	Ṛṣabha / Ādinātha	Caulukya	860 A.D.	Akoṭa, Gujraṭ	Baroda
		Cedi	11th A.D.	Tripurī, Madhya Pradesh	Indian Museum, Calcutta
		Gāhaḍavāla	12th A.D.	Mahet, Gonda, U.P.	

6. Bhattacharya, *ibid.* Introduction, pp. xv - vi.

S.N.	Tirthaṅkaras	Period	Century	Names of the places	Museum
2.	Ajitanātha	Cedi	10th A.D.	M.P.	Nagpur M.
3.	Sambhavanātha		12-13th	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
4.	Abhinandanātha		12-13th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
5.	Sumatinātha		12-13th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
6.	Padmaprabha		12-13th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
7.	Supārśvanātha	Rāṣṭrakūṭa Cedi	9-10th A.D. 10-11th A.D.	Kaṭoti, Canda, Mahārāṣṭra, Tripuri, M.P.	
8.	Candraprabha	Candella	12th A.D.	Deogarh, Jhansi, U.P.	
9.	Suvidhanātha/ Pūṣpadanta		12-13th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
10.	Śīṭalanātha		12-13th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
11.	Śreyāṃśanātha	Cedi	10-11th A.D.	M.P.	Nagpur M.
12.	Vāsupūjya		12-13th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
13.	Vimalanātha		12-13th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	

S.N.	Tirthankaras	Period	Century	Names of the places	Museum
14.	Anantanātha		12-13A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
15.	Dharmanātha		12 - 13 th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
16.	Śāntinātha	Rāstrakūṭa	10th A.D.	Rājñapur - Kinkin, Akoṭa Gujrat	Nagpur M.
17.	Kunthanātha	Tomara	15-16th A.D.	Gwalior Fort, M. P.	
18.	Aranātha		12-13th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
19.	Mallinātha		12-13th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
20.	Munisuvrata		12-13th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
21.	Naminātha		12-13th A.D.	Khaṇḍagiri, Puri, Orissa	
22.	Neminātha/ Ariṣṭanemi	Cauhān	12th A.D.	Narhaḍ, Pilai Rājasthān	National Museum, New Delhi.
23.	Pārśvanātha	Vardhana period	7th A.D.	Bihar	Indian Museum Calcutta.
24.	Mahāvīra	Cedi	10-11th A.D.	Jabalpur, M.P.	Nagpur Museum

At the end it can be said that the Jain Iconography of Professor B.C. Bhattacharya is still a pioneering work, and whoever wants to study Jain Iconography must consult this book as an authority. Originally the book was published from Lahore in 1939. Its second revised edition was done in 1974 with a foreword by B.N. Sharma, the then Keeper of the National Museum of New Delhi. His Foreword is an excellent one and gives succinctly the information about Jain Iconography. My article is based on this book with some additional notes from here and there to record the facts at a glance and to deal with the matter chronologically as far as possible¹.

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1. In writing this, I have derived much help from my friend Dr. S.C. Mukherjee of Calcutta.

ANEKĀNTA AND ITS PARALLELS BETWEEN JAIN AND HINDU MYTHOLOGIES

Deven Yashwant

Jainism has three golden rules : 1. Ahimsā, 2. Aparigraha and 3. Anekānta. The theory of Anekānta propagates to look and understand the existence or non-existence of a particular object or opinion from different angles. According to Dr. Bimal. K. Matilal, it is the central philosophy of Jainism. It teaches about many-sidedness of an object or opinion. It is the policy of acceptance of all different theses and views without rejecting any of them. The doctrine of Anekānta helps us in cultivating the attitude of toleration towards the views of others. Dr. Y. J. Padamarajia has described it as the theory of manifoldness. The 13th century Jainācārya Malliṣena described it as a doctrine which recognized that each element of reality was characterized by many mutually opposite view points such as permanence and impermanence, or being and non-being.

The onesided view (*ekāntadr̥ṣṭi*) can never give us complete or whole truth. The multisided view (*Anekāntadr̥ṣṭi*), which takes into account all the possible views, can only give us the idea of completeness. This multifacetedness promotes reconciliation of all the conflicting views.

According to Dr. L.M. Singhvi, Anekānta is a multifaceted exchanging reality with infinity of viewpoints depending on the factors of Time, Space, State and Nature of the objects and the subject. Anekānta further means that absolute truth cannot be grasped from a particular view point alone, because absolute truth is the sum total of different viewpoints that make up the Universe. Dr Singhvi further clarifies that because of the theory of Anekānta Jainism does not look upon the Universe from the self-centered viewpoint only but from the viewpoints of others too.

In the Ṛgveda we find two opposite viewpoints about the origin of the Universe: *sat* as well as *asat*. The Satkāryavāda of Sāṅkhyadarśana says that the Universe was created out of existence i. e. *sat*, whereas Asatkāryavāda of Vaiśeṣika says that it was born out of non-existence i.e. *asat*. In the Sāṅkhya system it is said that *sat* cannot come out of *asat*. Both of these philosophies could be viewed from the *ekāntadṛṣṭi*. All these views were, however, permitted to flourish. Permission to flourish seems to me an example of Anekānta in these two philosophical system.

The Lord Buddha introduced the Madhyamamārga in his philosophy. To avoid controversies Gautama always chose the middle path. He even went to the extent of avoiding controversial questions. Buddha had firmly expressed his views saying that some questions were totally irrelevant and therefore did not deserve to be considered. Nāgārjuna, the Mādhyamika philosopher of the 3rd century A.D., introduced the theory of Catuskoṭi as follows:

1. Everything is true, not everything is true,
2. Both,
3. Everything is untrue, not everything is untrue,
4. Neither everything is true, not everything is untrue,

In the beginning of the post-Christian era we saw several theories finding their way in the Indian stream of thought. Everyone was trying to prove his set of theories as the perfect one. They all criticized each other as seen in Darśanas, Upaniṣads and Buddhist literature. The rival schools of thoughts by their arguments and counter arguments only encouraged dogmatism and intolerance in philosophy. In such serious controversial situations adopted by Sāṅkhya, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mimāṃsā, Vedānta and Buddhism, the philosophy Anekānta was born.

The Vedic system of thought was quite different from other systems of Indian philosophy. Buddha propounded the Madhyama mārga, but left some deep questions unanswered by saying that such questions are unanswerable and non-describable. There are different

views about these questions whether they were answered or not. Some scholars are of the opinion that all such questions were answered by Buddha in the Mādhyamika way. The difference between Buddhism and Jainism lies in the fact that the former while accepting the middle path rejected the extremes altogether, whereas Jainism accepted both ends of extremes, and thereby made a reconciliation between both extremes. Jainism introduced the theory of Syādvāda. It does not mean doubt. It means “may be or may not be”. According to Jainācārya Siddhasena Divākara, Vaiśeṣikas only combine the standpoints, but do not synthesize them. The Jains, on the other hand, synthesize the two and build a coherent whole. Siddhasen also said that the Vaiśeṣakas and Bauddhas are correct in so far as they point out the faults and fallacies of the Sāṅkhya view of casuality and the Sāṅkhya philosophers are correct to the extent that they criticize the Buddhists and the Vaiśeṣikas. But when these two views of casualty (*satkāryavāda* and *asatkāryavāda*) are adjusted together in compliance with the Anekānta method, the result would be the True Insight i. e., *samyag darśana* or Omniscience. Seven standpoints were used for expressing Anekānta.

1. Possibly existent,
2. Possibly non-existent,
3. Possibly both existent as well as non-existent,
4. Possibly inexpressible,
5. Possible existent but inexpressible,
6. Possibly non-existent but inexpressible,
7. Possibly existent as well as non-existent but is inexpressible.

The Mādhyamika philosopher Nāgārjuna in his *Mādhyamika-kārikā* defines it as “everything is true, and not true, both everything is true and not true; or neither is true, nor is true. This is the teaching of Buddha.”

These seven standpoints can be summed up in four different positions:-

1. Possible existence.
2. Possible non-existence,
3. Possibly both existence as well as non-existence,
4. Possibly neutral.

In such serious controversial circumstances, Anekānta was introduced. The Vedic as well as Buddhist thoughts did not even consider the views of other schools of thought resulting in Ekāntavāda. The Jain system of Anekānta permitted also the philosophical assertions of different schools of thoughts. Here they added the word *syād* i.e. *kadācit* or may be from some angle, aspect or point of view. According to Jainācārya Malliṣena “the particle ‘*syād*’ signifies manifoldness. And so the *syād* is the doctrine of manifoldness. That means that the acceptance of a single entity which is variegated by a plurality of attributes, namely non-eternal and eternal etc.”

From the above, we can say that the Jains were ready to accept and consider the theories and viewpoints of their adversaries also. The meaning of Anekānta teaches us to be tolerant towards the viewpoints of adversaries also. Philosophy is always a complicated subject and is always within the realm of the intellectuals. Jainism propagates Ahimsā i.e. non-violence and non-violence has to be observed towards all beings in any form and due consideration has to be given to this view. To avoid any violence towards the views of others was regarded as intellectual Ahimsā. According to Dr. A.B. Dhruva, the doctrine of accepting the viewpoints of others is *bhāvahimsā*. To respect the viewpoints of others is Anekānta and Anekānta means tolerance, *bhāvahimsā*. To avoid conflicts among different schools of thoughts Jain thinkers introduced this doctrine. Really speaking without conflicts humanity could not seek perfect harmony in the world. In the 7th century A.D. Jainācārya Samantabhadra in his Granthāvali said that to stick to Anekānta itself would be Ekantavāda.

The view of Ācārya Samantabhadra means the non-acceptance of your own philosophical point. As such some Jain Ācāryas said that

all others might be correct in their own spheres and this means that one's own view is also incorrect.

To overcome this problem some Ācāryas after Samantabhadra and Siddhsena Divākara quietly introduced this theory which said that others might also be partially correct, but this possession of the whole or absolute truth would be possible only with the Omniscients. According to the commentary written by Jainācārya Ātmā Rāma (Vijayānanda) Sūri in the third section of the second chapter of the *Ācārāṅgasūtra* (the first of the Jain Āgamas), it is clearly mentioned that without the possession of *samyag jñāna*, *samyag darśana* and *samyak cāritra* one cannot attain Mokṣa and these three qualities are available only and only with the Jains. Omniscience knowledge (*kevala-jñāna*) only manifests the complete knowledge, and any other knowledge is a false knowledge. He comments that the Tīrthaṅkaras have said that without these three qualities the followers of other faith are not capable of attaining liberation, nor are capable of leading others. Jainācārya Hemacandra Sūri in the 12th century A.D. in his *Yogaśāstra* wrote that the gods of other religions were confused a lot on account of being engaged in eating meat, consuming liquor, dancing, singing, music, laughter etc. and as such, are incapable of experiencing the whole truth. They are incapable of leading people to the right path as the Tīrthaṅkaras can only experience absolute truth, as such, they were the only Sarvajñānīes and nobody else. The Jains called the Tīrthaṅkaras the only personalities who had experienced truth in full. Tīrthaṅkara is a post which one can attain only after penance for ages. Vardhamāna also penanced in number of births to attain this post. Jainācārya Sushil Muni in 1958 published a book titled *Jainadharmā*. In the chapter Muktimārga of this book it is mentioned that to achieve and maintain *samyag darśana* a pure one should avoid five vices, namely:-

1. To doubt the sermons of Vītarāgas,
2. To possess the desire to embrace any other religion,
3. To doubt about fruits of his own religion and have a hatred

view about saints of his own religion.

4. To praise Mithyādr̥ṣṭies,
5. To have intimacy with the Mithyādr̥ṣṭies.

Suspecting that the theory of Anekānta may not stand test, Jainācārya Ātmā Rāma (Vijayānanda) Sūri while writing commentary on the *Ācārāṅgasūtra* has mentioned in the 1st section of the 8th chapter that the Jain saints should not accommodate the saints of any other faith in place of their own. The Jain saints should not offer food, water, etc. to the followers of other faiths. He goes to the extent saying that even if he has to offer any edibles, it should be without any respect. He has further mentioned in the same chapter that the Jain saints should not maintain relationship with saints of other faiths and should not pay respect to them. The Jain saints should not visit them. On one side one says that everybody can be perhaps right, whereas in practice one is not ready even to meet, talk, discuss or even give respect to others. The saints of other faith have been branded, as “śīthilācāris”.

Such stories prove themselves supreme, although against the spirit of Jainism, and these stories naturally made a negative impression of the Jain masses easily on account of their sheer ignorance of the Jain doctrines. One finds such controversial stories proving the supremacy of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva and others in different Hindu mythological stories. The followers of each of them criticized and fought amongst themselves for the absolute supremacy of their deity.

However, the claim of experiencing absolute truth and the stories connected with it were challenged first by Jainācārya Haribhadra Sūri who in chapters 1-33 of his *Ṣaḍ-darśana-samuccaya* says that it is unbelievable that only Vardhamāna was Sarvajñānī who could experience absolute truth. He even disputed the claim of Vardhamāna having been worshipped by gods by saying that the jugglers and magicians often demonstrate such miracles for their own benefit. Later on, we find another Jainācārya Yaśovijaya Sūri mentioning

that “To conceal one’s own blemishes, and to establish one’s own viewpoints, some people change the dictates of religion and take people to the wrong direction. Such persons do not speak the truth at all, because of such circumstances people search true religion but do not get it.”

Jainācāryas further have explained saying that the theory of truth seen by others was only partial and not the absolute truth. They compared it with a story of seven blind persons judging the elephant from seven different angles, where each one was correct in his own way. But none of them could see the elephant as a whole. By this example, the Jainācāryas meant that truth could be experienced only when all the partial truths were put together and not otherwise. The theory introduced by Jainācāryas looked bright, but they could not sustain it on account of lack of their own understanding of the doctrine. When this supremacy was forced upon, it went against the original dictates of Jainism. As such the theory of Anekānta put up in any way could not withstand the tests. As discussed above theories and philosophies are the subject of the intellectuals only and not of the masses. The doctrines established by the intellectuals are seldom understood by the masses. The doctrines established by the intellectuals are seldom understood by the masses. The intellectuals seldom agree among themselves as we see in the case of Darśanas and Upaniṣadas and other different works. The masses simply follow the easily understandable fancy stories.

To reach the masses stories describing the supremacy of one’s own religion were introduced on the pattern of Hindu mythological literature. It is a fact worth noting that when somebody boasts and others also boast in superlative terms, the idea behind it is to show his own supremacy and degrade the others. Below are given some of the examples.

In his book *Dhūrtākhyāna* Jainācārya Haribhadra Sūri has criticized Hindu Paurāṇic stories by getting them proved to be true

by different Dhūrtas. Although the way of criticism is not indecent, but criticism is there. It can easily be called criticism of the Purāṇas. The Dhūrtas narrate all fantastic stories and prove them to be true with the similar stories available in different Purāṇas. However, the learned Jainācārya did not touch the Jain mythological stories of which there is no dearth. A child immediately after his birth presses a mountain of one lac *yojanas* by the thumb of his foot to the extent that the mountain trembles. A horse increases his size to unbelievable extent, but bows down only by a single punch of the fist of the child. These stories are attributed to Vardhamāna.

We find that Ācārya Vimāla Sūri in his *Paumacariyan* called all the writers of Rāma-stories as liars. The respected characters of Hindu Rāmāyaṇa are portrayed in disrespect. To give a few examples, Hanuman of the Rāmāyaṇa, a perfect bachelor, is painted as a womanizer. Rāvaṇa, a disreputable character in the Rāmāyaṇa, is portrayed as the would be Tīrthaṅkara in another age. Rāma portrayed as God in the Rāmāyaṇa is said to suffer on account of his acts of violence and could attain liberation (Mokṣa) only after a penance of 19000 years. The *Mānavadharmasāstra*, a book of Brahmanical system, is described as Hīmsāsāstra by Ācārya Hemacandra Sūri in his *Yogsāstra* [2.37-40].

Bhaṭṭāraka Vādicandra openly criticized the Brahmanical Śiva Purāṇa as false simply for presenting the genealogy of the Pāṇḍavas contrary to Jain Mahābhārata.

In the Āvaśyaka-cūrṇi, a Jain religious book of the 8th century A.D., Śiva is described as the son of a nun who had been magically impregnated by a wizard and in this process got a hole in his forehead (seems to be the version of the 3rd eye of Śiva). Śiva is here stated to have been killed for his violent behaviour by a prostitute named Umā. In Hindu mythology Umā is known as Pārvatī and is also worshipped along with Śiva. The idea seems to simply degrade the deities of other religions.

On probing further in literature one finds a story in Mudita Kumudacandra, a work of the 12th century A.D. where it is stated that in a religious discussion (*Śāstrārtha*), Digambara sādhu Kumudācārya was defeated by a Śvetāmbara sādhu named Bhaṭṭāraka Vādiva Sūri. After the *śāstrārtha* was over, it was declared that Śvetāmbaras being better, Digambaras had lost. The defeat of one man is publicized as the defeat of the whole sect.

Another story is available in volume II of the *Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra and His Ācārya Paramparā* by Sh. Nemicandra Śhāstrī. Aklaṅka and Nikalaṅka, two nephews of a Jain Ācārya after education in Jain system, were sent to a Buddhist monastery to get the knowledge of the Buddhist system. They were sent in disguise as Buddha monks. They were, however, recognized and done to death. To take revenge of their death, 770/1440 Buddha monks were killed by getting boiling oil poured over them. This story seems to be totally impractical, but gives a peep into the working mind of the writer.

A quick glance on some of the comparative stories will not be out of place here.

In the 10th chapter of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, it is mentioned that Kṛṣṇa born to Devakī in prison was transferred immediately to Yaśodā in Gokul. This was done to save him from death at the hands of his maternal uncle Kaṁsa. To match the above it is mentioned in the 10th parva of the *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacarita* that Vardhamāna was in the womb of a Brahmin woman named Devanandā. He was fathered by Ṛṣabhādatta. On the 83rd day of the pregnancy the foetus was taken out from the womb of Devanandā and placed in the womb of Triśalā, the queen of king Siddārtha. A male god named Naigameṣṭhī who was the commander of Indra's army did this job. It is mentioned that both the mothers were sleeping at the time of exchanging the foetuses. This is also mentioned in the aforesaid book that the idea behind this version is that a Tīrthaṅkara can take birth only in a pure and high family of Kṣatriyas and not in a low and beggar family i.e. Brāhmaṇas.

In the same 10th chapter of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* it is also mentioned that to save people from the wrath of Indra, Kṛṣṇa in his adolescence lifted one Yojana sized mountain named Govardhana. To counter this achievement of Kṛṣṇa, the Jains in the 10th parva of the *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacarita* introduced the story that immediately after his birth Vardhamāna was taken by the gods for ritual bath and other ceremonies as well as for worship. To show his power the just born child pressed the one lack sized Sumeru mountain by the thumb of his foot to the extent it trembled.

In the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* it is said that Kāmsa sent a demon, disguised as a python, to kill Kṛṣṇa. The python shaped demon increased his length to one yojana, but this huge sized serpent was killed by Kṛṣṇa. To match the above, it is mentioned in the *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacarita* that a god, disguised as a serpent of huge size, was sent to test the strength of Vardhamāna. It was thrown to a far place by eight-year-old Vardhamāna. The god serpent apologized for his misbehavior and was pardoned.

In the 10th chapter of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, it is also mentioned that Kṛṣṇa was playing with his mates. A demon was sent in the guise of a horse. The children mounted the horse who flew in the sky. All the children were scared, but Kṛṣṇa killed the horse with one punch of his fist. In the *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacarita* we find a matching story that a God in the guise of a horse comes to test Vardhamāna's strength. The horse increases its size to a great extent, but bowed down on being punched by Vardhamāna. The god apologized and was pardoned.

In the 16th chapter of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* it is mentioned that to kill Kṛṣṇa a deadly serpent Kalia bites Kṛṣṇa, but with no effect on Kṛṣṇa. In turn Kalia was killed by Kṛṣṇa. In the 10th chapter of the *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacarita* it is mentioned that a serpent bites Vardhamāna in his posture of penance. Milk comes out of the body of Vardhamāna instead of blood. In return the serpent was administered the religious sermon by Vardhamāna.

In the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* a python grasped at the feet of Kṛṣṇa's father Nanda. Nobody could get him released. Kṛṣṇa comes to the scene and python leaves the feet of Nanda. In the *Triṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita* a deadly snake *Caṇḍakaūsika* bites Vardhamāna, but cools down after getting no retaliatory response of anger or pain from Vardhamāna.

In the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* a demon named Triṣṇāsura was sent by Kaiṁsa to kill Kṛṣṇa. The demon came in the shape of a hurricane and took Kṛṣṇa in the sky, but Kṛṣṇa killed him by asphyxiating his neck. In the *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita* it is described that once Mahāvīra was crossing the river Gaṅgā in a boat, a god created a storm to overturn the boat, but was defeated by two attendants of Mahāvīra.

In the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* it is mentioned that once a big fire broke out in Vraja. All the inhabitants were frightened, but the fire was swallowed by Kṛṣṇa. To match the above Ācārya Hemacandra Sūri in his *Triṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita* mentions that once Mahāvīra was in penance under a tree, a fire broke out and spread all around. His companion Gosālaka ran away out of fear, but Vardhamāna remained in penance. The fire died down on its own by the influence of Vardhamāna.

In the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* Kaiṁsa had deputed an elephant named Yapid to kill Kṛṣṇa, but himself was killed by Kṛṣṇa. In the Jain story there is a pair of elephants deputed to test the strength of Vardhamāna. The elephants bowed to Vardhamāna after finding him stronger than them.

In the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* Kṛṣṇa is portrayed as the protector of cow. In the Jain system we find that the 22nd Tīrthṅkara Neminātha (who is said to be in relation to Kṛṣṇa) saved the lives of thousands of all types of elephants from being killed for the feast at the time of his marriage.

Numerous such works and narrations by the Jain writers can be found where the other system of faiths, religions, rituals and philosophies have been criticized in derogative terms. The list will be endless and will do no good to quote them all. However, there is a specific difference between these stories. In Jain mythological stories the gods come to test the strength of Vardhamāna and in turn are not killed but pardoned. The simple question arises in the mind that when the gods were aware about Vardhamāna's fate as "a would be Tīrthānkara" then what was the need of testing his strength?

In conclusion we find that the theory of Anekānta was in existence in the Vedic times in its own way. Their start was Anekānta, but the end result was Ekāntavāda. The Jains also introduced it, but were not able to maintain it on account of practical difficulties in its implementation. Anekānta means tolerance. Unfortunately, we do not find the examples of tolerance. Division of the Jain community and its religious order into hundreds of sects, subsects and groups from centuries onwards of the Christian era, show that the Jains did not adhere to the theory of Anekānta all the time. Such divisions which started immediately after the Nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra would continue till date on flimsy grounds and not on solid principle. It was mostly misunderstood, misinterpreted and misrepresented by Jain laity as well as saints. Non-tolerance by Jainācāryas gave birth to different Sanghs known as Drāvidas, Kāṣṭhakas, Māthuras, Śvetāmbaras, Digambaras, Yāpanīyas and also into further sects, howsoever small they might be. The religious saints of one sect criticized each other openly stating that his own way is the perfect one. The Jains prove themselves by saying that they linked their doctrines as having come down to them directly from the mouth of Mahāvīra. Such saints taking a cue from the commentary on the *Ācāraṅgasūtra* by Jainācārya Ātmā Rāma (Vijayananda) Sūri do not see the saints of the other sects with respect. They got some followers too and they also follow their teachers in observing non-tolerance towards other sects. Numerous disputes are pending in legal courts for almost hundred years with no end in sight.

Is this Anekānta?. To understand and practise it we will have to understand it with a neutral mind. It has to be understood in the Anekānta way and not in the Ekānta way as has been made for centuries together.

I would like to conclude by quoting the 17th century Jainācārya Sūri that “now a days people who call themselves Jains are quarrelsome and stubborn in their false opinion. Such persons, to prove themselves correct, misinterpret the doctrines of the Tīrthaṅkaras by exhibitionism. Such persons, to conceal their own faults and to prove themselves correct, act against the doctrines of religion and as such do not speak the truth. Under such circumstances, people search the religion, but do not get it”.

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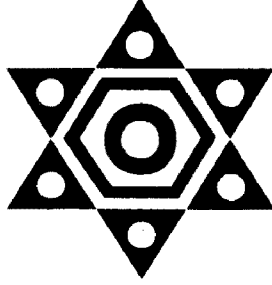
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